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## DECORATIVE ART IN LONDON.

BY HENRY B. WHEATLEY.

THE lovers of all things old, and the believers in everything new are not likely to come to any agreement, and the question as to the glory of the "good old times" will not soon be settled. The other day Mr. W. Morris lecturing at Birmingham, on the Gothic Revival, said that "the fourteenth century furniture did not reach our standard of comfort, but every piece was properly made and properly ornamented, that was to say, was beautiful."

It is, however, pretty certain that the reason why all the old furniture left to us is so good, is to be found in the fact that the bad stuff had not sufficient vitality to exist so long. Good things are being made now and will survive, while the bad ones, over which we lament, will have been destroyed.

Is imitation a sham? was a question raised in a lecture given the other day by Mr. Hampden Pratt, before the Architectural Association. The author protested against the use of scagliola and

look as if it had been erected by his heirs. I hope that we who have been instrumental in thus doing honor to one who has given the world an immeasurable amount of pleasure, will not be open to a charge of perpetuating a sham.

Mr. Madox Brown has completed the sixth of the twelve mural paintings he is engaged to produce for the Manchester Town Hall. The subject of the picture is the "Proclamation regarding Weights and Measures." In 1556 the Count Leet of the barony of Manchester passed an edict directing all measures and weights to be sent in on a certain day to be tested, thus laying the foundation of commercial integrity in the town. The artist has represented the disgust of the master and mistress of a general provision shop at the promulgation of this edict.

A loan exhibition of ecclesiastical vestment and embroidery has been opened at the School of Art Needlework, South Kensington, in which the examples range from the highest art when embroidery was at its prime, to the debased taste of a later age. The most antique specimen dates as far back as 1300.

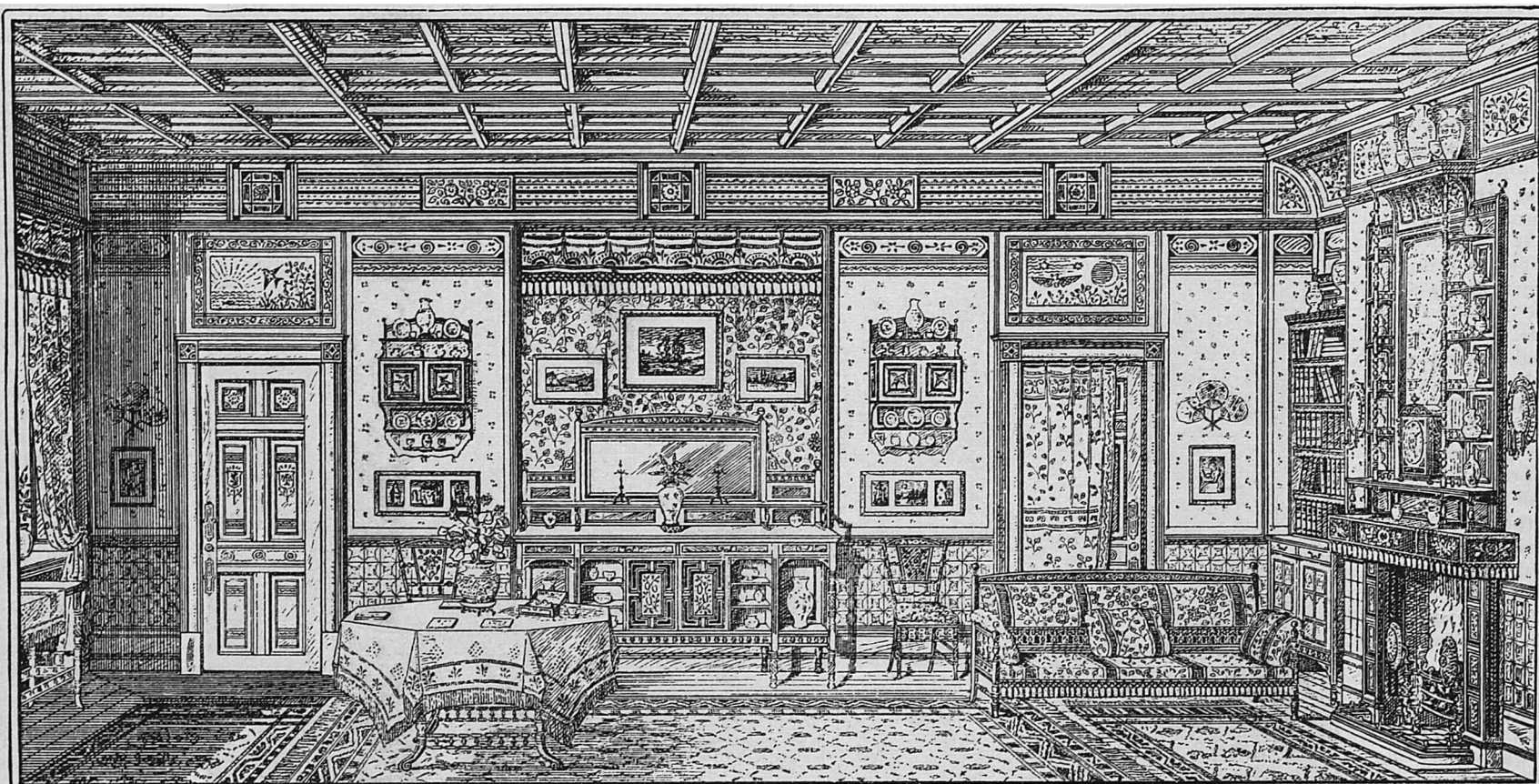
It is from the British Museum and consists of a panel of English embroidery in silk with gold

desired pattern, and the hollow portion is filled in with plaster of Paris.

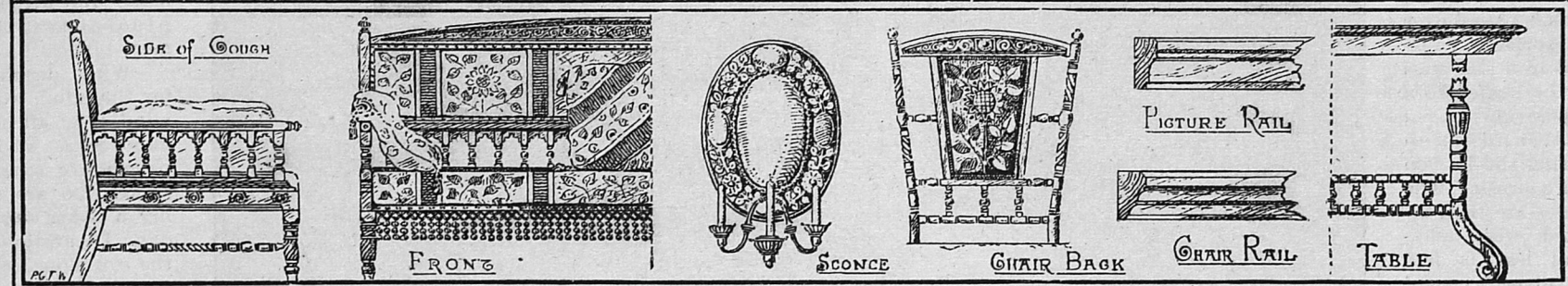
The ornamentation of looking glass is not an art to be altogether commended, but note must be made of some very ingenious examples. Mr. T. J. Gullich has painted on a mirror a very elaborate design of fruit with the accessories of salver, loving cup, glasses, etc. The "fixative" used is said to resist the action of a scrubbing brush. At Messrs. Osler's, in Oxford Street, is shown a glass with a magnificent copy of one of Landseer's stags, the "Monarch of the Glen," engraved upon the back. Over the engraving the silvering has been placed, and the effect to the spectator is that of the animal coming out of the glass towards him.

The Building Trades Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall contains an excellent show of a great diversity of objects. There is a striking exhibition of Lincrusta-Walton in various colors and tints, and in other forms of wall decoration, Messrs. Woollams & Co., and Messrs. Jeffrey & Co. figure among the foremost.

I will close this letter with a reference to the labors of Dr. Richardson for the advancement of sanitary science. He read a paper on the 26th of March, at the Society of Arts, on "Vital Steps in



DRAWING ROOM FURNISHED &amp; DECORATED IN THE OLD ENGLISH STYLE



clever imitations of marble; and the practices of veneering and graining met with little favor. Several of the speakers in the discussion were not prepared to go so far as the lecturer, and they did not see any particular dishonesty in the production of a good imitation when the original would be too costly a material.

A pleasant meeting took place at the church of St. Olave's, Hart Street, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 18th March, when a large number of ladies and gentlemen gathered together to witness the unveiling of an appropriate tablet which has been put up to the memory of the glorious old diarist, Samuel Pepys, who was buried there. The Earl of Northbrook, first Lord of the Admiralty, as the chief representative of the office which Pepys served so long and so well, was to have performed the ceremony, but at the last moment he was prevented from attending by pressure of public business. Mr. Russell Lowell, the distinguished representative of your country, whose presence on these occasions is highly appreciated by us all, had promised to assist. At the shortest notice he was called upon to take Lord Northbrook's place, and he delivered a most charming address. In a few years when time has mellowed the stone and alabaster, this memorial set up nearly two centuries after Pepys' day, will

and silver thread in linen, which originally formed part of an altar festal frontal. An exhibition such as this shows how much ecclesiastical work escaped destruction at the time of the reformation.

Some Jewish work, consisting of mantles for the scrolls of the law, is of considerable interest. A loan exhibition of French art at Glasgow has been arranged by the Town Council, and it is highly spoken of as a fine collection of valuable specimens.

There is an arm chair said to have belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, and many beautiful boule tables, several of which belong to the Duke of Buccleuch. Two of the London Companies—the Carpenters' and the Joiners' propose to open in May an exhibition of every kind of illustration of both carpentry and joinery, and they offer prizes and invite workmen to send in specimens of their skill. Some curious old wood carvings from a monastery in the South of Germany, which have been cleared out by the restorer, are being exhibited in Pall Mall. There are ceiling ornaments, panels, spiral ornaments, etc. Some of the figures of saints are fine and others grotesque.

An ingenious person has invented a plan of imitating wood carvings by soaking veneer in a boiling solution of caustic soda. When sufficiently soaked, the wood is pressed into molds with the

Sanitary Progress," in which he made a suggestion for the formation of walks and flower-gardens on the tops of our houses. It was hinted in the discussion that some of the doctor's proposals were somewhat Utopian, and I was much struck by the eloquence with which he defended his scheme of a city of Hygeia.

He said, and with these words I will conclude—"The truth was, that he had remarked for years that the subject of sanitation did not seem to bite, so to speak; people were apathetic about it; they treated it as a disagreeable subject, connected only with drains and pipes, and so he thought he would strive to give it a start in a new way, by drawing a picture of what might be. That picture had been exhibited not only all over the country, but all over the world, and from the most distant colonies he had read letters thanking him for it. In Lancashire it had been printed with the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and sold for one penny. It gave the public a taste for sanitation, and the result was that Hygeia was rising up everywhere, you saw a little bit of it in one home and a little bit in another. Jules Verne, in his own inimitable way, had constructed another city, which he said he had copied from it, and so the thing spreads, and in time it would be all realized."